

## **Executive Report to Full Council – 17 August 2010**

### **Transformational Leadership**

#### **Budget Impacts - Councillor E Woodburn**

On 25<sup>th</sup> May in the run-up to the Emergency budget, the government announced, in outline, reductions in grants to local authorities for 2010/11. Further details of these 2010/11 cuts were released on 10<sup>th</sup> June, and the 22<sup>nd</sup> June Emergency Budget set the scene for severe cuts in 2011/12 and beyond.

The impact for Copeland of the announced 2010/11 grant reductions is a reduction in grant allocations of £204k relative to the approved 2010/11 revenue budget, and a £195k reduction in capital funding. It is envisaged that the cessation of grants will have implications on the overall budget position and this will be addressed through the Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report.

Looking beyond 2010/11, these reductions to current year grants, particularly the reduction in Working Neighbourhood Fund, combined with the announcements made in the Emergency Budget of 22<sup>nd</sup> June, send a more ominous signal about the funding settlement for 2011/12 and beyond. In response to this, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), previously considered by Resources Planning Working Group in April, has been updated. The revised MTFS is a forecast revenue budget gap for 2013/14 of up to £3.8 million. The principal reason for the increase compared to the gap of £2.8 million reported in April is the much-increased risk that funding for Working Neighbourhoods could cease from 2010/11. As a consequence the forecast funding gap for 2011/12 has increased to £2.1 million.

These projections still contain very considerable degrees of uncertainty. Spending totals for individual government departments for 2011/12 to 2014/15 will be announced in the Spending Review due on 20<sup>th</sup> October and funding for individual authorities will not be announced until the Revenue Support Grant Settlement, due in December. However, whilst the uncertainty over future resource forecasts should be noted, the Council's need to continue to work on addressing imminent severe cuts to funding is indisputable and the ongoing Service Review process is key to this. The early stages of Service Review work have identified ongoing savings of approximately £455k towards closing this gap and work is ongoing across the Council to identify further options.

## **West Cumberland Hospital Project – Councillor E Woodburn**

North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust have secured £70 million capital funding from the Department of Health for the redevelopment of West Cumberland Hospital.

The Government is reviewing all future hospital projects in the context of the Spending Review and has concluded that West Cumberland will be treated on an exceptional basis, given its stage of development, evident priority and the relationship with local economic redevelopment through the energy coast programme.

Progress on site continues and demolition of the former Windermere, Buttermere and Crummock wards is complete. Yewdale Ward which needs to be vacated ready for demolition by September 2010 is subject to discussion between Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (Occupier) and the University Hospitals Trust regarding options for relocation of those services provided there.

The development remains on programme and within Budget but it is essential that the Trust secures the remaining balance of funding to deliver the full £100m project which includes £10million provisionally allocated by the North West Development Agency which is unlikely to be forthcoming. The Trust is therefore reviewing the Full Business Case for the project.

## **Nuclear Issues**

### **Nuclear New Build – Councillor E Woodburn**

The new government has recently confirmed that it is planning to re-consult on the National Policy Statements (NPS) for Energy and latest indications are that this will take place in the autumn. However for the Nuclear NPS the Government intends to analyse the responses received to the consultation earlier this year and publish the Nuclear NPS in the autumn. This will include details of sites that the Coalition Government view as potentially suitable for deployment as nuclear power stations by 2025. The new Government has also indicated that it intends to abolish the recently established Infrastructure Planning Commission but will retain the principles of considering applications for development consent for major infrastructure projects through a new Major Projects Unit as part of the national Planning Inspectorate but with the ultimate decision sitting with Ministers once more.

The consortium bringing forward the development of a site at Sellafield for new nuclear power station facilities continues to develop the company structure to take forward the proposals. The consortium expects to host an introduction event in late autumn that will confirm the new company brand. Initial site assessment work is underway along with a search for local temporary office accommodation. Initial information suggests that the company will be seeking to make a decision to invest

around 2014 with an application for development consent being made later that year and a projected start on site around 2016. Further discussions with consortium representatives will take place shortly regarding the entering into of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA), which if agreed will provide resources to cover additional and substantial tasks required to be carried out by the Council as part of the development consent process.

RWE have given up their Grid connections, the implication being that they are not seeking to develop their sites in the short term. They are however, still deployable by 2025. Should RWE wish to pursue these sites then we would also expect to enter into a Planning Policy Agreement, as with all Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

In order to ensure the effective distribution of power generated by new facilities in West Cumbria, grid capacity across Cumbria and Lancashire will need to be enhanced. Early discussions with National Grid are underway regarding potential route options which in due course, will be the subject of an application for development consent, and the need for extensive community consultation. Cumbrian and Lancashire local authorities have had initial discussions regarding how to work together to engage with National Grid. Early indications are that resource implications for the local authorities will be funded through a Planning Performance Agreement with National Grid.

### **Telephone and Internet Electoral Registration – Councillor N Williams**

For the 2010 electoral registration canvass we will be introducing telephone, Internet and SMS registration options for the first time. We have taken a one-year option on HERA, the electronic registration product of our election software provider Halarose, with further options for additional years subscriptions at a later date. HERA will give electors the opportunity of a single transaction re-registration by telephone, SMS or Internet. These registration options can at present only be used to confirm existing electoral register entries – new registrations or changes to personal details still require completion of a standard form.

Further reports on our first year's experience of electronic registration will follow in future reports during and after the 2010 canvass.

## **Locality Working Update – Councillor J Bowman**

The Locality Working team is now fully in place with Joe Shearer and Trudy Harrison joining Alan Hurton, Sarah Mitchell and Simon Walker. The team is geographically based, with Joe supporting Whitehaven and Howgate Distington, Trudy the south and Five Rivers areas and Alan the North East and West. The team is in place until March 2012.

During June each of the six locality areas, now at varying stages of development, has been able to comment on the first stage draft of the Single Sustainable Community Strategy for Cumbria. Emphasising Copeland's localities at the heart of the process has been an important part of demonstrating the commitment of both county and district councils to working in partnership with communities, primarily by working more effectively with our parishes.

Whitehaven, South and West Copeland localities have all now begun to use the learning from the pilot areas to inform their own joint working. In Whitehaven, all wards will work to prioritise their communities' issues and to bring these together into an issues paper for Whitehaven. This will form the basis of a plan and will guide the locality partnership in working with partners in the voluntary, community and business sectors alongside service providers and other agencies to form task and finish groups addressing priority issues.

In Egremont and Millom, urban plans, equivalent to parish community plans, will be developed to ensure that evidence based needs highlighted by communities are the basis for locality plans, and where parish plans need to be refreshed or developed, assistance will be given by the Locality Team and partners at ACT to ensure that local needs provide a firm base to inform service delivery and project development.

The first meeting of the localities together was held at the end of June, 2010, where the LSP development and early discussion on the Copeland input into a Cumbria Sustainable Communities Strategy, titled the Cumbria Single Outcomes Framework. A further workshop on the Copeland perspective of the sustainable communities strategy evidence and theme issues will take place in Cleator Moor on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August. The second joint localities together meeting is taking place at 6pm on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September in Egremont Market Hall. The quarterly meetings are valued and attended by all the localities to information share, discuss shared topics and look at development issues.

## **Member Training and Development – MAP Interviews – Councillor J Bowman**

It's pleasing to report that 75% of Members have completed MAP (Member Action Plan) interviews in the past few weeks. These interviews will provide the raw material from which our Member Development programme for 2010/11 will be drawn up. 75% take-up is also the target we need for re-accreditation to the North West Employers' member development charter, so thanks to all those who took part.

### **Customer Care at Copeland – Cllr J Bowman**

During June and July the Copeland Customer Care Programme has been delivered to 55% of the Copeland workforce. The workshops are part of the Council's programme of improving services for customers.

Attending these workshops is a requirement for all employees and aims to update skills and knowledge in working with our customers. The workshops have been designed to meet the needs of the different groups of employees and their workplaces.

The remainder of the employees will attend sessions in August and September. Plans are in hand for Councillors to be able to attend their workshop in customer care skills and knowledge by the ends of October.

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## **Improving Quality of Life**

### **Shared Services Revenues and Benefits - Councillor G Clements**

The Revenues and Benefits Shared Service with Carlisle and Allerdale is now up and running with the transfer of staff taking place on 1 June. Recruitment to the new structure started on 22 July following discussions with Trades Unions and staff to confirm the job matching procedures.

The implementation of the Shared Desk Top remains on schedule for the service to be fully operational from October 2010.

### **Housing Issues – Councillor G Clements**

#### **Strategic Housing Market & Needs Assessment, 2010**

Further to my last report I am pleased to say that the primary data survey from residents has exceeded its targeted response sample and currently stands at over 3,800. This is sufficient to reach the definition of a “precise” survey as defined by the Office of National Statistics. Members may recall that the household survey comprises a sample of households in Whitehaven, Egremont, Cleator Moor and Millom plus 100% in all rural parishes within the Borough. Secondary data will come from a very wide range of sources in the public, private and voluntary sectors. The report is now expected to be completed in October this year. The assessment is timed to inform our emerging Local Development Framework and its critical dates in 2011/12. The outcome we seek is local housing and planning policies that will be sustainable for a generation of our residents.

#### **Cumbria Choice Based Lettings Scheme**

Following the resolution at Full Council on 24 June this year I am also pleased to announce that the Council has now joined the scheme as a full partner. It will enable the Council and its housing service users to participate in a Cumbria-wide scheme for the letting of social rented homes provided by housing associations in the county. Its working title is Cumbria Housing Choice and its present go-live date is January 2011.

#### **Supporting People News**

Sadly, the news from the Supporting People Commissioning Body is more sombre. In its capacity as the financially accountable authority, Cumbria County Council asked the Commissioning Body to agree a target of £1.515m in savings over three years. In order to achieve it the County Council also asked the Commissioning Body to put on hold all planned new schemes that have yet to start and where there is no

capital allocation committed by the Homes and Communities Agency. As a result, a proposed revenue funded scheme to provide housing related support for people with mental health needs and substance misuse in Copeland and Allerdale has been postponed indefinitely. These are very difficult times for the Cumbria Supporting People Programme and we shall need to examine whether there is a realistic prospect of alternative funding sources over the next three or more years.

### **Home Insulation**

To help residents manage their heating costs this winter, and also reduce the extent of fuel poverty, the Council has teamed up with a private sector provider and other local authorities in Cumbria to offer assistance with the cost of cavity wall and loft insulation. 141 Copeland residents responded to letters of invitation in July and booked surveys that will enable them, subject to survey, to pay:

£25 for cavity wall insulation

£25 for loft insulation (if they have less than 60mm installed already)

£75 for topping up loft insulation to 250mm if they have less than 100mm already).

The scheme is open to home owners and people who rent from private landlords. Residents of housing associations are served by their landlords' Decent Homes Programmes.

This was a pilot and limited sample scheme for Copeland for this summer only in the first instance. The response has been very encouraging. We are looking to extending and running it again for more people, subject to funding.

### **Health Workshop Findings – Councillor N Williams**

At a recent health workshop it was brought to our attention the lack of facilities for breastfeeding. Breastfeeding has a major role to play in promoting public health and reducing health inequalities with clear short and long term health benefits to both mother and child. Breast milk not only provides complete nutrition for the development of healthy infants but babies who are not breastfed are many more times likely to acquire infections such as gastroenteritis in their first year. Women who do not breastfeed are less likely to return to their pre pregnancy weight and have an increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

The figures for Copeland show above average breast feeding initially to below average after 6 weeks

We can play a part in supporting mothers who wish to breastfeed through providing suitable places for them to feed. A report on ways to improve the facilities is to be prepared.



## **Promoting Prosperity**

### **North West Development Agency – Councillor Cath Giel**

It has been announced that the NWDA will be dissolved by 31 March 2012, although there is a possibility that this date may come forward following the Comprehensive Spending Review due in October. As a consequence £5m has been taken out of the Britain's Energy Coast, West Cumbria's (BEC WC) budget this year. A Policy and Strategy Delivery Committee has been established as part of the BECWC Board in order to prioritise projects and ensure that the funding that remains (Predominantly Nuclear partners funding) is dedicated to projects that deliver against the following objectives: Job creation/retention; Inward investment; De-risk nuclear new build; and, Quick wins. No new projects are being considered and the emphasis moving forward will be on capital projects. The main focus of activity will be on Whitehaven.

Whilst this prioritisation process is ongoing all projects are potentially at risk, but we have been working hard to emphasise the importance of Albion Square, Pow Beck and the Whitehaven Transport Interchange, the delivery of which would begin the physical, economic, and social transformation of Copeland.

### **Tourism resources – Councillor Hugh Branney**

Cumbria Tourism is also being affected by the planned demise of the NWDA. The Board will be restructuring the organisation to half its current staffing. This will in turn impact on the Destination Management priorities and action plan during this year and future years. Our West Cumbria tourism partnership has a funding profile for project activity which has also been affected by the loss of NWDA funding. Britain's Energy Coast had agreed the West Cumbria Destination Management priority plan will not now be supported with NWDA funding. The West Cumbria tourism partnership is meeting quarterly with positive engagement from business, local authorities and Cumbria Tourism.

### **Beacon Update – Councillor H Branney**

During the first quarter of 2010-11, The Beacon has won two Cumbria Tourism awards for Access and Customer Service, welcomed over 17000 visitors and taught over 900 school pupils. Children in the United States have discovered Whitehaven's "American Connections" via video-conference, a new Beacon website has been launched and access information is now available in foreign languages.

Fulfilling the Beacon's funder-approved Business Plan doesn't just mean meeting lifelong learning or visitor figure targets. A commitment to establishing a sinking fund to hold revenue budget surplus has meant that the next phase in gallery redevelopments is now possible. In the first of a new series of galleries created to ensure that The Beacon is always changing providing visitors with something new to see every time, Executive approval has been given to access £105K from the sinking fund to create a new Popular Culture gallery, celebrating the 1960s, 70s and 80s, which will open in February 2011.

On show in the Harbour Gallery until 18<sup>th</sup> September, Whitehaven's Maritime Past features some of the best artworks from Copeland's museum collection alongside paintings borrowed specially for the exhibition from Merseyside Maritime Museum, Tullie House and the Harbour Commissioners. Admission to the Harbour Gallery is free and is open 10am to 4.30pm every day until September.

### **Whitehaven Carnival 2010 – Councillor H Branney**

Cultural Services for the first time took part in the Whitehaven Carnival. They entered a float, which was accompanied by local netball players and children from the Schoolympics 2010. The float was called 'Copeland Stars of the Future.' It featured a variety of baby characters re-enacting Olympic events; the characters were created by the 'Bumps 2 babies' young mums group from Whitehaven, Arts Development and local artist Carl Sowerby. The local netball players were from the Copeland netball league and the children were from the team that represented Copeland at the Schoolympics 2010. The Schoolympics children carried flags made by participants on the successful Pathways to Arts programme, which works with residents on benefits and is managed by the Cultural Services department.

The Cultural Services 'Stars of the Future' float won first place!

Cultural Services were also at Castle Park where they offered advice about sports and arts activity in Copeland and handed out over 1500 Copeland leaflets. The Sports Development team also offered netball and a mobile climbing wall as activities for residents on the day.

### **Free Swimming – Summer Extension – Councillor H Branney**

Due to cuts made by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Free Swimming for under 16's and over 60's was due to finish on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July. However in Copeland Free Swimming will now finish on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2010.

This will allow Free Swimming to be enjoyed by Copeland residents at Copeland pool and Egremont pool over the entire summer holiday period.

In 2009/10 nearly 58,000 residents participated in Free Swimming. This consisted of 16,608 over 60's and 41,350 under 16's.

The extension is being funded by NCL Copeland and Copeland Borough Council.

### **Playbuilder Year 2 Funding – Councillor H Branney**

The government has announced cuts of at least £169.5m to capital funding for a range of projects affecting children and young people, including money for youth facilities, new playgrounds and improved social work IT systems.

We have received confirmation for County Council that this will mean that our Playbuilder year 2 schemes cannot be funded through this route.

The Council has committed to continue our support to the community groups affected by this announcement in order for them to move their projects forward. We are currently working with them to seek funding from other external sources.

### **Lakes Alive - Copeland 2010 – Councillor H Branney**

Following the success of the crane based-aerial show in Whitehaven last year, Lakes Alive returned to Whitehaven for two days over the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of May with a completely different event - a two day harbour-based festival.

On Saturday the festival kicked off with Adrift, the world premiere of a brand new musical show from Cumbrian artist Dan Fox, followed by a spectacular procession from Spanish company Sarruga, with their show Peixos. This parade took the audience on a journey to the depths of the ocean. Accompanied by music and light, it was a memorable event for the residents.

On Sunday, the harbour became home to a street theatre festival, where a variety of performances from across the UK and beyond entertained residents with dance, comedy, circus, clowning throughout the day.

The harbour event had crowds of between 7000-10,000 (as estimated by Cumbria Police).

In addition to the harbour festival there was a tour of 'The Cabaret of Dr Caligari' between the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and 1<sup>st</sup> of August. The tour performed at Muncaster Castle, Egremont Castle and Millom Park. The performances were well received and were well attended.

Copeland Borough Council invested £20K towards the events total budget was over £80K for the whole lakes Alive programme in Copeland. The programme was also supported by Cultural Services Arts Development department.

### **Apples play at the Rosehill Theatre – Councillor H Branney**

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of July the Rosehill Theatre bought the Northern Stage Company to Copeland to perform the play Apples. Apples is the stage adaptation of Richard Milwards novel were Adam and Eve are growing up on an estate in Middlesborough and are having to deal with; drinking, drugs, sexual health, teenage pregnancy and adolescence.

For this play the Rosehill Theatre has been working in partnership with Copeland Borough Council's Arts Development, Connexions, North East Copeland Youth Partnership and Young Cumbria. The partnership has been using Apples as a way to increase awareness of issues delt with by the play and also to engage young people with the theatre.

This resulted in the young people setting up a board to advise the Rosehill Theatre about the play. The board set up a night club in the reception area of the theatre, had board members acting as door staff and also helped to market the play through social media sites.

The board will continue to advise the Rosehill on future events and is now also working with Whitehaven Civic Hall on and under 18's music event.

### **Planning Policy – Councillor G Blackwell**

The Council's LDF Preferred Options consultation has been carried out during June and July. The response rate has been in line with previous consultations – over 400 representations received and an opportunity for local views at the 5 public meetings held.

A report on the consultation responses and a progress report on the LDF evidence base will be submitted to Members' LDF Working Party during August when we will also discuss the implications of developing national policy including the cancellation of the Regional Strategy.

Planning Aid North helped with the consultation by running a couple of schools sessions in Millom. These were very successful in engaging both primary and secondary school pupils in the process of choosing priorities for change and developing options. We are looking to organise similar events for schools in the North Copeland area in autumn.

### **Transport - Councillor G Blackwell**

The County Council has published a consultation draft for its Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026. It is called "A Route Map to Long Term Prosperity" and a report will be made to the next meeting of the Executive on 24<sup>th</sup> August. It is hoped to arrange

County Council representation at the meeting to enable a wide discussion of transport issues and to open up this part of the meeting to all Members who might wish to attend.